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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9787  
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 08227

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PINS CE  
SUBJECT: PLOTE AND THE LTTE

REF MADRAS 3214

¶1. CONFIDENTIAL--ENTIRE TEXT.

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¶2. ACCORDING TO TAMIL FSN WITH GOOD CONTACTS IN THE NORTH, APPROXIMATELY 75 PLOTE MEMBERS TURNED OVER THEIR ARMS TO THE LTTE IN JAFFNA OCTOBER 30. THE FSN DESCRIBED THE PLOTE FIGHTERS INVOLVED AS MEMBERS OF THE ANTI-UMA MAHESWARAN FACTION OF PLOTE WHICH SPLINTERED FROM THE PARENT ORGANIZATION IN JULY 1986.

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¶3. A GSL MILITARY OFFICER TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE SRI LANKAN PRESS HAD OVERPLAYED THE "PLOTE SURRENDER TO THE LTTE," AS FEW MEMBERS OF PLOTE HAD IN FACT HANDED THEIR WEAPONS TO THE TIGERS. IT WAS THE OFFICER'S OPINION THAT THIS ACTION WILL DO LITTLE TO CHANGE THE MILITARY BALANCE ON THE JAFFNA PENINSULA, AS "PLOTE REALLY COULD NOT GET MUCH MORE INACTIVE THAN THEY WERE BEFORE." CITING REPORTS OF MINOR CLASHES BETWEEN THE LTTE AND THE EPRLF OVER A FEW ABANDONED PLOTE OBSERVATION POSTS IN JAFFNA, THE OFFICER SAID HE BELIEVED A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN THE EPRLF AND THE LTTE WAS IN THE OFFING.

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¶4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PLOTE IS THOUGHT TO BE THE LARGEST OF THE TAMIL INSURGENT ORGANIZATIONS, IT HAS SO FAR REFRAINED FROM WIDESCALE INVOLVEMENT IN THE GUERRILLA WAR. PLOTE HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY DORMANT IN THE JAFFNA PENINSULA, WHICH APPEARS TO BE LARGEMLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE LTTE. HOWEVER, PLOTE HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN THE NORTH-CENTRAL VAVUNIYA DISTRICT, AND TO A LESSER DEGREE IN PARTS OF THE EAST. WE HAVE SEEN NO REPORTS OF A PLOTE "STAND-DOWN" TAKING EFFECT ANYWHERE OUTSIDE OF THE JAFFNA AREA. END COMMENT.

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¶5. AS THIS WAS BEING TYPED AMBASSADOR AND POLOFF SPOKE WITH PRINCIPAL OF JAFFNA COLLEGE, WHO APPEARED TO AGREE WITH GSL MILITARY OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT PARA 3. HE SAID PLOTE WAS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE IN JAFFNA, BUT THAT EPRLF WAS AND THAT SHOWDOWN BETWEEN IT AND LTTE WAS POSSIBLE. THE PRINCIPAL, PASSING THROUGH COLOMBO FROM JAFFNA ON HIS WAY TO THE UNITED STATES, SAID THAT THE PERCEPTION IN THE JAFFNA AREA WAS THAT LTTE WAS THE STRONGER AND MORE DISCIPLINED OF THE TWO MILITANT GROUPS. HOWEVER, THE EPRLF HAS CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT--BOTH MONETARY AND MORAL--FROM TAMILS IN EUROPE, WHO BELIEVE EPRLF MORE LIKELY TO TRANSCEND CASTE BARRIERS THAN THE LTTE WHICH IS GAINING INCREASING SUPPORT FROM THE JAFFNA TAMIL ELITES.

SPAIN